

CHILD COUNSELLING AND PLAY THERAPY

Parent/ carer information sheet



Many children experience challenges that can affect their wellbeing at home or school, and while support from trusted adults often helps, sometimes working with an independent, trained therapist can be beneficial. Reaching out for counselling or play therapy can feel like a big step, but it can give children the opportunity to explore and make sense of their experiences and develop coping tools. Sessions take place weekly in school with the same therapist, on the same day and the same time, to provide consistency and stability.

The referral process

Once we receive a Referral Request and signed Parent/ Carer Consent Form, we'll be in touch to chat with you about your concerns and to decide on the most appropriate type of support for your child.

Contact with therapists

Once a child is assigned to a therapist, the therapist will contact parents or carers to introduce themselves and confirm when sessions will begin. Contact with parents and carers occurs only at key points to ensure confidentiality, and any additional meetings must be requested by texting or emailing the therapist, as phone calls may not be monitored regularly. If there are any concerns about the child's wellbeing or their sessions, parents or carers should contact the school in the first instance. Therapists are not able to provide crisis support; if there are serious concerns about a child's mental health, families should contact their GP or attend their local A&E department.

Play Therapy

Play Therapy is usually offered to children between years 1 to year 3. We offer 12 weekly, individual play therapy sessions in school.

Therapists work alongside caregivers and school staff to support the child throughout their time in the service. Your child's play therapist will be in touch at the start to introduce themselves; at the mid-point to discuss how things are going at home and any changes you've noticed; and at the end to let you know that sessions have ended and to share any information the child wishes to be passed on.

In play therapy your child will be able to play with a wide range of toys and creative arts materials to help them express and make sense of their thoughts and feelings when these are difficult to put into words. The therapist will support your child to work through difficulties at their own pace and will introduce play activities to help them make sense of and feel better about their experiences.

Primary School Counselling

For pupils in years 4–6, we usually offer a series of six weekly counselling sessions in school. Counsellors work alongside caregivers and school staff to support the child throughout their time in the service. Your child's counsellor will contact you at the start to introduce themselves and at the end to let you know that sessions have finished, sharing any information your child wishes to be passed on.

The therapist works at the child's own pace, helping them address issues such as emotions, friendships, change, loss, worries, or difficult experiences. Sessions are tailored to each child's needs and may include a combination of talking therapy, play-based activities, psychoeducation, and coping strategies.

What can I do to help?

Parents and carers play an important role in supporting their child during therapy. To help the child feel safe and able to speak freely, what they share in therapy is kept confidential. Therapists only share information if:

- The child asks them to,
- There are concerns about safety, or
- The law requires it.

At times, it can be beneficial for therapists to share relevant information from conversations with parents or carers with the school or other professionals involved in the child's care, so everyone can work together to support your child in a positive way.

To ensure that children gain the maximum benefit from counselling or play therapy, and to maintain fairness for those on the waiting list, referrals will be reviewed where attendance is inconsistent. If a child misses more than three scheduled sessions, the referral will be closed.

Children may choose not to talk about their sessions, and this is not necessarily a sign of concern — they may simply not have the words yet. It's best not to push for details about their counselling sessions. Instead, showing patience, understanding, and availability helps the child feel supported and safe.

Our therapists don't expect "good" behaviour — they want children to feel free to express themselves without judgement. Therapists are trained to understand and manage all kinds of behaviour and to work with the underlying reasons behind it.